

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 01287 251339Z

43 S

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 221020Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2067

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

DAMASCUS 25

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 1287

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, SY, TC

SUBJECT: LOCKHEED PLANES FOR SYRIA

REF: A. LONDON 11703; B. ABU DHABI 1242, C. ABU DHABI 1284.

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH UAE AMBASSADOR TO LONDON

TAJIR IN DUBAI SEPT. 19, WITH DEPASSTSECY SOBER
PRESENT, I MENTIONED HIS EMISSARY'S MESSAGE TO LOCKHEED
EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT AIRCRAFT SALE MIGHT GO TO
FRENCH. TAJIR LOOKED COMPLETELY BLANK. WHEN I EXPLAINED
GIST OF LONDON REPORT IN GREATER DETAIL, HE SAID FLATLY HE
HAD NOT INTENDED ANY MESSAGE TO BE CONVEYED TO AMERICAN EMBASSY,
LEAST OF ALL ONE RECOMMENDING THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER SEND ANY
MESSAGE. HE WAS VISIBLY UPSET AND ANGRY, AND ASKED ME
SPECIFICALLY TO INFORM HIM WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE.

COMMENT: LOCKHEED REP LOMBARD MAY HAVE BEEN VICTIM OF
SOMEONE WHO IS MISREPRESENTING TAJIR (IN WHICH
CASE TAJIR FOR ONE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO THIS INDIVIDUAL
IS) BUT I WONDER ALSO IF LOCKHEED'S AGGRESSIVE SALESMAN-
SHIP MAY NOT HAVE LED THEM TO DO A LITTLE MISREPRESENTING
THEMSELVES. BEFORE WE ALLOW USG TO BE PUT INTO ORBIT BY
ANY FURTHER REPORTS ALONG THESE LINES, WE SHOULD LOOK INTO THEM
CAREFULLY.

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PAGE 02 ABU DH 01287 251339Z

2. TAJIR SAID THAT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO SYRIAN PURCHASE. SYRIANS WERE STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH CERTAIN COST FACTORS OF TRISTAR COMPARED TO AIRBUS. HOWEVER, HE (TAJIR) WAS FIRMLY PERSUADED THAT TRISTAR WAS BEST AIRCRAFT FOR SYRIAN PURPOSES AND HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO SYRIANS THAT ABU DHABI WOULD NOT GUARANTEE LOAN UNLESS SALE WENT TO LOCKHEED. WHEN I ASKED IF IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT OTHERS WITHIN ADG WERE PUSHING AIRBUS, TAJIR SAID SHAIKH ZAYID HAD LEFT MATTER ENTIRELY IN HIS HANDS.

3. COMMENT: MY HUNCH IS THAT SHAIKH ZAYID PERSONALLY DOESN'T CARE WHETHER SALE GOES AMERICAN OR FRENCH AND BELIEVES THIS CHOICE SHOULD BE LEFT TO SYRIANS. I ALSO DOUBT THAT TAJIR WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING ZAYID TO WITHDRAW OFFER OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT IF SYRIANS FINALLY OPT FOR AIRBUS. HOWEVER, TAJIR HIMSELF SEEMS FULLY COMMITTED TO LOCKHEED, PARTLY BECAUSE, ONE MUST ASSUME, LOCKHEED HAS MET HIS PRIME. QUESTION IS, WILL SYRIANS BELIEVE TAJIR'S THREAT OR HAVE THEY, THROUGH OTHER EMISSARIES DISCOVERED THAT ASSISTANCE WILL PROBABLY BE FORTHCOMING WHICHEVER AIRCRAFT THEY BUY? TAJIR, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, IS PERSONALLY CONFIDENT FOR LOCKHEED AND IS PLANNING TO BE IN DAMASCUS SHORTLY TO PRESS ITS CASE.
STERNER

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O.MR. EALUM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ABUDH01287
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740270-0173
From: ABU DHABI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740924/aaaaaucg.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: A. LONDON 11703; B. ABU DHABI 1242,, C. ABU DHABI 1284.
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <11 MAR 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LOCKHEED PLANES FOR SYRIA
TAGS: EAIR, SY, TC, LOCKHEED
To: LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005